

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 27. 1742.



HERE are not many general Rules which admit of fewer Exceptions than this, *That every Man is subject more or less to Superstition.* In order to have a just Idea of this, we must first have a true Conception of what is, or at least ought to be, meant by Superstition; and we must then compare this

with the general Conduct of Mankind. By *Superstition* is meant an ill-grounded Opinion of the Divine Interposition, attended with a certain Kind of Fear occasioned thereby. This distinguishes Superstition from Religion, for whereas the latter is either founded on, or at least consistent with Reason, the former takes its Rise either from Prejudice or Fancy.

It is reported of the famous *Thomas Hobbes of Malmesbury*. That tho' he affected to be thought, and was, indeed, a great Philosopher, yet he was afraid of being in the Dark; and tho' in his Writings he speaks problematically enough of Spirits to incline one to doubt his Belief, yet by manifesting a Dread in the Dark of what he pretended to despise in the Light, he shewed he had still a Spice of Superstition, notwithstanding all he had said and written against it. What Darkness was to *Hobbes*, Astrology, Chiromancy, Geomancy, or Dreams, are to other People; inasmuch that almost every Man wears about him some Rag of Superstition.

Not to mention the great Men of Antiquity, who in spite of all their Learning and good Sense have fallen into particular Veins of Superstition, we need but look into the best Memoirs of later Times to be convinced, that Men are just what they were; and that with all the Advantages of Reason and Religion, they are still too often the Dupes of Superstition. Many Instances of this Kind may be found in *Comines*, *Clarendon*, and *Bishop Burnet*; the latter especially mentions several great Men who gave into Notions of Astrology, and fancied that the Fate of particular Men was to be read in the Stars, and depended upon their Aspects. If I mistake not, that Prelate alleges, that King *Charles II.* who was undoubtedly a Prince of uncommon Parts and Knowledge, suffered himself to be governed in the most Critical Part of his Conduct, by Predictions drawn from that pretended Science.

Amongst all the various Kinds of Delusion which have taken their Turn in governing the Mind of Man, *Physiognomy* seems to have prevailed most, and to have kept its Ground longest; which is not to be wondered at, since almost every Man is governed by his particular Fancy in Faces, and likes or dislikes People at first Sight. Upon this Humour has been built a Kind of false Reasoning, which in most Ages of the World has passed for a sublime Kind of Science, and this too with Men otherwise of sound Parts and great Understanding. The Desire of penetrating into Things at once, of knowing the Inside of a Man by his Looks, and deciding at a View of the Complection of the Mind as well as the Countenance, has hurried many a great Genius into this Opinion, to which perhaps a strong Proportion of Vanity may have concurred; since there is nothing of which a Man is more apt to grow too fond than of his own Penetration.

When all this is considered, one needs not be at all amazed, that either the Artful or the Cunning, the Weak or the Enthusiastick, should pretend to reduce these flying Notions about Men's Faces to a Kind of Science, and establishing a Set of Rules for the Regulation of such whimsical Conjectures. The same Thing has happened in respect to every other Sort of Divination; and, indeed, upon the Comparison, it is very hard to say, which of these Systems of supernatural Wisdom is the greatest Folly; so shamefully ridiculous are they all, and so absolutely unworthy the noble Faculties bestowed by the All-wise Creator on the Mind of Man.

The oldest Writer on this Subject that I ever heard of, is *Polemon*, a Greek and his Work was translated into Latin by Count *Charles Montecuculli*; who has illustrated it with many learned Remarks. This Book I take to have been the Basis of all the Italian Writers, who have pretended to teach how to distinguish not only Men's Minds and Manners, but their Fortunes also, from the Features of their Countenances. Upon these Principles went that wise Prophecy as to the Misfortunes of King *Charles I.* upon the Carving his Busto at Rome. We have many circumstantial Accounts of this extraordinary Passage, out of which I have made choice of one, which has two Advantages, that it is full as strange, and much more succinct than any of the rest.

The Bust of King *Charles I.* carved by *Barnini*, as it

was brought in a Boat upon the *Thames*, a strange Bird (the like whereof the Bargemen had never seen) drop'd a Drop of Blood, or Bloodlike, upon it; which left a Stain not to be wiped off. This Bust was carved from a Picture of Sir *Anthony Vandylke's* Drawing: The Sculptor found great Fault with the Forehead, as most unfortunate. There was a Seam in the Middle of his Forehead (downwards) which is a very ill Sign in *Metoposcopia*.

The Whole of this Story is wonderful alike: The strange Bird, the Drop of Blood, and the Seam down the Forehead. But the Reason I made choice of it was, because I take it to be a very evident Proof of the Falseness of this pretended Art. There is not, perhaps, in all History, a Fortune in every Respect more singular than that of this Monarch; and yet, according to this fine Tale, his was a common Case. The unlucky Seam down the Forehead, had been found by Experience an infallible Sign of such Mischiefs as afterwards befel this Prince; and this we must believe without the least Evidence, against a Fact as clear and certain as any Fact can be. That the Course of his Life and Fortunes was such, as no Parallel can be produced of the like, either in respect to the Man or the Prince. This I deliver on the Credit of our best Historians and greatest Preachers; and I should think it hard, if it were not weighty enough to turn the Scale against an Italian Statuary's Conjecture.

In order to be satisfied as to the Fallacy of *Physiognomy*, we need only recollect how many great Men have had a very mean Appearance, and how many foolish People we have seen with fair and promising Faces. All the World has heard the Stories that have been told of *Bishop Wilkins* and *Dr. Barrow*, who deceived not only mean and vulgar Judges, but Persons of much Wit and great Discernment, by their contemptible Appearance. *La Fontaine* the French Poet, who was perhaps the greatest Original his Country ever produced, looked the least like a Wit, to carry the thing no farther, of any Man in France; and if it was just, or decent, one might perhaps produce living Examples as strong as this to the same Purpose; but there is no need of it, the Fact is too notorious to be denied; and therefore it is not difficult to discover where the Skill of *Physiognomists* has lain in other Cases, viz. in finding the Marks of Wit in a Man's Face, after all the World had found it in his Writings; or pronouncing this or that Prince a Hero, from the Cast of his Eyes or Make of his Nose, when his Arm had already made it manifest to the rest of Mankind.

Could we suppose any Truth in these Notions, they must draw after them such a Train of Consequences as would overturn all Philosophy, and indeed all kind of Knowledge whatsoever. For Instance, the Likeness in Families is generally own'd and taken Notice of: Now, according to the Rules of *Physiognomy*, a Son who is like his Father in the Face, must be like him too in the Qualities of his Mind, and in the Course of his Fortunes. Is this consonant to Experience, or rather is it not directly contrary to it. The *Austrian* Line had distinguished that Family thro' several Generations, but without entailing any Likeness in other Respects. And the Children of our King *Charles II.* resembled him strongly in his Features, tho' in little else. To dwell on this would be tedious, it is an Observation every Man may make every Day he lives, and yet it is impossible to make this Observation without seeing the Impossibility that these Rules should be true.

Again. It is commonly admitted, that Accidents which happen to Women with Child affect the Countenances of their Children, and have a very strong Power over their Features; but can any body be so mad as to believe, that these Impressions any way affect the Faculties of their Minds, or give any Byass to their Fortunes? Such an Opinion would be as absurd as that of the *Tartars*, who are said to hope they shall not only possess the Horse and Cloaths, but the Sense and Learning of any Man they shall kill. Could we once bring ourselves to enter thoroughly into the Belief of such a System, we might build very extraordinary things upon it, and a better Book might be wrote upon a certain Subject than that which has secured a Reputation to the Abbe *Quiller*.

At present I dare say I have sufficiently tired the Reader's Patience with Remarks on this fallacious Art; but as I am sensible that many things worth reading may still be said upon this Topic, and that there is nothing of greater Consequence to the Peace and Pleasure of Mankind than the driving such Errors as these out of their Heads, I reserve to myself a Liberty of entering again upon this Subject, and of treating of those Causes which have sometimes contributed to give a Sanction to these Sort of Predictions; in doing which, I hope I shall be able to entertain as well as to instruct.

Florence, October 15. N. S.

THE last Accounts from the Romagna are, that on the 6th Instant the first Column of the Spanish Troops commanded by the Duke d'Atrisco arrived at Forli, and proceeded immediately by continued forced Marches to Faenza, with a View, as it is supposed, to intercept the Austrian Cavalry, which was posted at Bagnacavallo, Lugo and Cotignolo, in the Neighbourhood of Faenza, under the Command of General Payersbach. The Duke d'Atrisco was joined the same Day by M. de Gages, and on the 7th by Count Mariani with the third Column; but all this Hurry and Fatigue of their Troops was rendered ineffectual by the timely Retreat of M. Payersbach. The Spaniards were expected on the 12th at Castel Bolognese, but whether to continue their March towards Bologna, or to retire into the Ferrarese, was uncertain. As the Austrian Cavalry, (consisting only of 2400 Horse, to which was added 300 Croatians) had been detached solely with a View of preventing the Spaniards being supplied with Provisions from the Ferrarese; they were forced to retire on the Approach of the Spanish Army, and have joined M. de Traun at Buon Porto. We are not yet informed whether the latter designs to pass the Panaro, but Letters are expected from the Army this Evening. In the mean time Preparations are making here for the Reception of Part of the Troops from Leghorn; the first Column departs from thence the 16th, and is to be followed two Days after by the second. Many Letters from Naples and Rome have mentioned a Suspicion, that the King of the Two Sicilies designs to reinforce M. de Gages with two Regiments of Horse, which the King of Spain formerly lent him, and that they were march'd to Rieti for this Purpose. Captain Osborn, of the Salisbury, who has been appointed by Vice-Admiral Matthews for the Service at Leghorn, remains there with three Ships.

HOME PORTS.

Bristol, Oct. 24. This Day arrived the *Philip*, *Lauderdale*, the *Pompey*, *Lane*, and the *Enterprise*, *Rowe*, all from Jamaica, and a Brigantine, from Newfoundland.

Dover, Oct. 25. Wind W. by N. Came in the *Britons*, *Ferry*, and *Hopewell*, Tenders, from a Cruise; the *Matthew*, *Gregory*, and the *Arran*, *Wellward*, both for Ireland, the *Charming Molly*, *Polkinghorn*, for Falmouth, and the *Yarmouth*, *Neale*, for Padstow, all from London. Sailed the *Young Ankerman*, *Ankerman*, for Hamburg. Arrived the *Mary*, *Naylor*, the *Allen* and *Agnes*, *Moneur*, and the *Dursley Galley*, *Neate*, all from Jamaica; the *Hothersfall*, *Clark*, from Barbados; the *Industry*, *Bond*, and the *Rebecca* and *Martha*, *Hampton*, both from Virginia; and the *Bleat*, *Fowler*, from Liverpool.

P. S. There are now some more Ships coming up.

Deal, Oct. 25. Wind W. Arrived the *William* and *Ann*, *Ladd*, the *Sea Nymph*, *Harman*, the *Lovely Harry*, *Trunsend*, all from Jamaica; the *Three Brothers*, *Rhodes*, from Barbados; and the *Happy Couple*, *Jones*, from Bristol. Remain the *Royal Escape*, the *Industry* and *Priscilla* Tenders, with the *Charming Susan*, *Scot*, for Carolina, and the *Catherine*, *Perry*, for Lisbon.

Arrived

At Jamaica, the *Molly*, *Gauthony*, from Philadelphia.

At Carolina, the *Italian Merchant*, *Smithson*, from Hull.

At Weymouth, the *Portland*, *Russell*, from Petersburg.

At Yarmouth, the *Betty*, *Watson*, from ditto.

LONDON.

Capt. Neat of the *Dursley* from Jamaica, came from thence the 14th of August, but on the 20th, to Windward of the Island, had a fierce Gale of Wind, which lasted 18 Hours; at the End of which he found himself within a Mile of the Shore, on which he saw a Ship which had been forced upon it. Aug. 26. he joined a Fleet in Donna Maria Bay, under Convoy of the *Stratford* Man of War, with which he sail'd on the 29th; but as many of the Ships sail'd very heavy, he, on September 6. being thro' the Windward Passage, made the best of his Way home.

Yesterday Count Stanberg, Secretary of State for Hanover, gave a Grand Entertainment to the Duke d'Artemberg, and divers of the Nobility, Foreign Ministers, and other Persons of Distinction, at his House at St. James's.

On Monday last the Right Hon. the Earl of Winchelsea, First Lord Commissioner of the Admiralty, set out for his Seat at Burleigh Hill in Rutlandshire, for a Fortnight.

To-morrow the Ode for his Majesty's Birth-day, composed by Colley Cibber, Esq; Poet Laureat, and set to

Music

Musick by Dr. Green, Master of his Majesty's Band of Musick, will be rehearsed at the Golden Lion and Devil Tavern, Temple-Bar.
Yesterday the Wife of — Patterson, Esq; of Delahay-street, Westminster, was safely delivered of a Son, to the great Joy of that Family.

BANKRUPTS.

William Fische, late of Rothwell, Northampton, Tailor-Chandler and Grocer.
Matthias Jackson, of Norwich, Beer-Brewer.

High Water this Day	Morning	Evening
at London-Bridge.	9 31	10 03

Bank Stock, 140 1-half to 3-4ths. Ditto Subscription, 3 1-4th Prem. India, 175. South Sea, 110 1-4th. Old Annuity, 115 3-8ths to 1-half. New ditto, 114 to 1-8th. Three per Cent. Annuities, 100 5-8ths to 3-4ths. Seven per Cent. Loan, 107 1-4th. Five per Cent. ditto, 76 3-8ths. Royal Assurance, 84. London Assurance, 11 3-4ths. India Bonds, 41. 95. Premium. Bank Circulation, 21. 175. 6d. to 31. Premium. Salt Tallica, 102 3-4ths. Three 1-half per Cent. Exchequer Orders, 104 1-4th. Three per Cent. ditto, 98. Million Bank, 116. Equivalent, 112.

At the Corner of Lincoln's-Inn Fields, near Clare-Market, on Tuesday the 2d of November, at Five in the Evening, will begin

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